Simplicissmus Vol 1, No. 1

Transated by Joe Bandel

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SIMPLICISSIMUS

Die Fürstin Gussalka

Simplicissimuss speaks

Oh, fool's play, this motley colored reality,

What is human sinks into your womb.

The bright and dark images glide past,

And what is little appears large to you.

But I will walk along rejoicing,

Here I am, free, young and innocent.

No sword, only helmet and Lance will I carry.

Only with cheerful words will I beat you.

You lazy folk, you have rested too long.

Wake up, wake up, the morning hour is near!

As the shy and silent night hastens away,

We will destroy the bitter seeds of servitude.

We suffer thirst, drink, — We fast, receive new bread, —

The wheel of Time runs through Parliament

And through spiked helmets

To the dark little door of one poor devil.

Yes, I am an imp, and my bell proclaims the

Soon to arrive morning blessings of heaven.

And wherever men laugh, I am there as well.

I tear the paragons of virtue out of all the heavens,

(My God, there are at least 100,000 pitfalls and traps)

Wisdom is rare, yet the sheep team together.

I am no Sampson, no Jewish priest,

Yet I beat at the places of the Philistines.

This short span of life is full of sorrow and tears

Between which few remain to be saved.

Crude fate lies always in ambush,

Its treacherous blow strikes well and hard,

Yet I remain cheerful, even when the game sours.

I soon rally and scrape my pain away.

Who, alone, can scrape all their pain away? —

Good fools are bitter fools.

Princess Russalka

By Frank Wedekind

"You are wondering how I have come to be a Socialist-Democrat and to marry a socialist leader," said young Princess Russalka to her friend who had just been married for the first time and become elevated to Baroness.

"The main reason is that my first marriage to the Duke of Galliera remained childless."

"But is that a valid reason?" asked the blushing Baroness.

"Perhaps my entire virtue is destined to be guilty," said the Princess. "It is hard to talk about it. As a child I was very taken in of my personal dignity. I knew of nothing higher in the world than myself. I looked into the mirror at myself like looking at a shrine. At the time I was cheerful and foolhardy, but there were certain things I would not joke about. My inner pride reared itself against them like a horse rears up before a nasty beast. That was my downfall.

One evening my sister, Amelia, began to speak with me about the origin of the species. I would have liked to strangle her. I was very religious and kept long hours in personal communion with the love of God. I was unshakably convinced that the love of

God had created me. I told myself that which folk created had no soul. Amelia and I grew up in a dark castle in Bohemia, far removed from the rest of the world. We had no one around us other than a sober caretaker and a frigid governess. I don't know how Amelia came to her wisdom.

Admittedly she was two years older than me, fat, indolent and lazy. One evening she told me that the miller's daughter in the village had gotten a child. I was shocked. I told her that it was not possible. Our parents, themselves, had gotten married in front of the altar in the church. Because of that God sent them children, not because they lived together for the first year of their marriage. It would be no different with me, and I wanted to justify myself to Amelia.

In the middle of the night I asked God if he would confirm that I was right and not Amelia. I heard a voice inside perfectly, "You are right Russalka, you are entirely right." And as my sister came to me once more the next day with her natural science explanation, I swore to her by myself, everything else and by the love of God, that I would prove to her that there were no illegitimate children in this world. Amelia laughed, but I was so serious in my conviction that I felt a fiery zealousness in me and longed day and night for the opportunity to present itself.

Around Christmas my father always came home from Vienna for the hunt with his entire crowd of hangers on. One winter he brought the Duke of Galliera along with. I was 16 years old. Right on the very first day I took him for a gentleman. He was 28 years old, very clever and attentive. He enlightened me of my lunatic resolutions in all imaginable ways.

Amelia, with a young lieutenant out of Budapest, always stayed close by. But after three days the misfortune happened. I told her about it that same evening. She became deathly pale and fell in a faint. Then she cried and sobbed the entire night, beat on her breasts and tore at her hair. I exhausted all the strength of my soul trying to console her. Naturally, it didn't help much that I remained so solidly confident. Finally she sank down in front of me, as if before a high being and embraced my knees.

Shortly after New Year's the wild host of gentlemen left. After I had made my foolhardiness known to Amelia, the Duke scarcely gave me more than a glance. He acted with all imaginable modesty in his reserve.

Then came spring and sometimes I became anxious. I begged the dear Lord to not let me waiver in my belief. Whenever I thought back on that Christmas Day and the Duke I became overcome with doubt, but didn't have the slightest reason for it.

It was on September evening on the balcony that I finally said to my sister, "Now you see that I was right. In the future please leave me in peace with your opinions."—

She never said a word more about it. She looked straight at me and then threw her arms around me and kissed me. But at Christmas when the Duke came to the hunt once more with my father an entirely different emotion seized me, one which I had never known before. My father surprised us as the Duke was holding my hand.

We spent our honeymoon in Naples. I was very, very happy. Then we moved back to castle Egersdorf in Moravia. We were isolated from all others, depending on our own happiness to live. I longed for a child as only a young wife can. It seemed unthinkable to me that this bliss would not fall to me. During the first years I spoke of it daily, of how it must come true like the snow and the spring. It didn't happen.

I prayed through entire nights. I prayed on my knees and swore to the dear Lord with hot tears, asking him to let me die rather than refuse his blessing upon our marriage. It didn't happen. After a while the Duke began to look at me strangely. I noticed that he became much cooler in his love. We became bored with each other.

Then my cousin, Countess Telecty out of Vienna, came for a visit. The Duke found her very appalling. But she was an entirely new world for me. She had read everything, everything that had ever been written in Europe. Ibsen, Tolstoy, Zola, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche and Sudermann. She was a walking library. In six months she had made a just as fanatical atheist out of me as I had earlier been a believing Catholic.

And then just as I felt not one trace, not one straw of believe, of — of certainty in me anymore, just as I lost everything that I had ever held to be true, I became aware that in the meantime she had won my husband for herself and already carried a child from him under her heart.

I was brought back to Vienna unconscious. I lay in a fever for long weeks. After my convalescence I

traveled to my father and asked if he would take on my divorce. And with his help “divorce” was the way I came. After that I traveled here, back to Berlin, in order to perhaps meet a lawyer. But from the very first hour I knew which company I preferred, the spirit children like my cousin, Countess Telecty. I looked like a remnant out of the Middle Ages that had managed to stay unnoticed in this place by chance.

I became inspired with a fiery enthusiasm for everything modern. I cut off my beautiful hair, didn’t wear a corset any more, wore men’s clothing at the performers Ball and wrote about the question of women’s rights. Before one year passed I was wearing them openly at meetings in public assemblies.

At the premiere of “Hedda Gabler” I made the acquaintance of Dr. Rappart. A few days after that I heard him speak at a Socialist-Democrat assembly. Then he visited me. His first words were a heartfelt imploration to the feminine nature that lived within me. That it was a woman’s job to make a man happy and something that I was meant to do. He said I was working against my own nature, that what might be entirely right and possible for another was not meant for me.

At first I resisted, in-service to our cause. But he had seen through me so completely and entirely, that I sat across from him looking like a child that had just been reprimanded for her bad habits. By his third visit he asked me to become his wife. I gave him the brush-off, even though I had learned to love him very much.

Everywhere I went folk were talking about him, entire Berlin flocked to him, the Tribune, even the artistic cabdriver. At one parade I watched under the lindens as he brought the folk, a thousand voiced, to shouts of joy. I heard the workers, one after the other; speak of him, saying that there was no truer man on this earth then him and his high mission in life. And I knew, what was the next most dear to him.

But I had no courage. I felt shut out from all human happiness because I doubted that I could ever give children to any man. Then came the most horrible day that I will ever live to see. I resolved to die. I took morphine. They took me to the hospital. When I came to, I cried miserably because it had been in vain. But he stood there near me and bent down over me. The doctor left us alone and then—then my strength faded to nothing. I cried and cried on his breast and told him everything. I begged him to go away from me. But he would not leave me alone for even one day. At that time, in order to console me, he told me that he himself did not really believe either.

And finally—I knew that there was still some happiness in this world waiting for me. It was the same way with him—then I put my arms around his neck and embraced him, let him kiss me. I still felt so infinitely unworthy at that time.

We got married. He insisted that we get married in a church. I understood him very well but didn't dare say a word. And now—

The Princess got up quickly and went into the next room, picked up a rosy, little, blue-eyed Social-Democrat from out of his crib. He was already

looking with serious eyes at the young Baroness who had gotten up at the same time.

“Now what do you think of my luck?”

The Baroness smiled, “Only a little Baron of my own could be more dear—or perhaps a Baroness.”

Greeted By Fear

The roses glow as always

The dark leaves tremble

I wake up in the grass

Oh, if you would only come!

The midnight is so deep

The Moon floods the garden gate

Its light flies across the ocean

The willows rise so silently upwards

The back of my neck revels in moist Clover—

I love you as never before!

Such love as I have never known

I have embraced you so often

And blindly enjoyed your innermost

So why does such fear greet me,

Rise up, when I am so overflowing?

Oh, if you were here with me now

To see how the firefly couples crawl

I will never leave you again

Oh, if you would only come!

The roses still glow as always

Richard Dehmel

Siesta

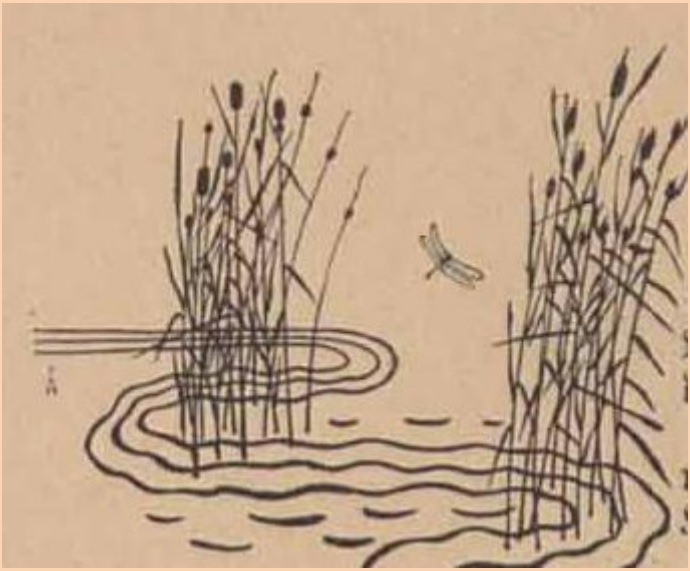
By Jacob Wasserman

It was a warm August afternoon. I lay dreaming under the strong dark fir trees of the black Forest. A resinous fragrance penetrated the air in the forest and even the cuckoos were silent. I dreamed of myself as Master and King. An immense kingdom was mine and the folk of the Earth humbled themselves before me. I lived in a Golden Palace, the vaulted arches carried sapphires and diamonds and held up the balcony on which I awaited the approaching night. Billions of roses streamed their fragrance to the setting of the sun. Voluptuous women tarried, thirsting for my favors and the slaves moved around me, countless like sparrows.

Then a small, pale, tattered little girl came along the path. She came barefoot from out of the hard piney forest floor and carried a bundle of brushwood on her back.

“Oh, Herr!” she stammered and held out her hand pleading.

I didn’t have a single copper piece of my own!



The Lonely Pond

It is a quiet pond in a desolate park. High reeds stand on its banks; ancient willows incline their branches deep down over the water. When the wind from the forest passes over it thousands of little voices sigh and whisper in the reeds, and the thin willow twigs make tiny ripples in the water that spread out to the banks. But soon it becomes quiet again.

The voices die away. With a soft hand the stillness smoothes out the water under the reeds and the night comes. The pond lies there like a large black cloth. The moon will not shine in it, or the stars. Only the white sea roses still glow ghostly. They are the great open wounds of the pond. Their pale leaves stand wide open like the lips of the dead. Dead quiet weighs over the pond. A path once went by along its edge, from time immemorial. Now and

then a person would walk along the path. The pond thought of that now. But the rains had washed all traces of the fine gravel into the water, and nothing showed of the path any more. Nothing showed of the folk that had once walked over it. Only the willows still knew anything of them, but silent and mute they guard their secret over the level mirror.

So has the pond rested since time immemorial. Only one place has life. There the water gurgles and stirs and cannot come to rest. It is like a mineral water on the surface, and as if something had fallen there, something still, deep, infinitely deep—down below.

Or as if an outraged hand had once flung a stone into the pond.

Arthur Holitscher, Vienna

Alone

It is so certain that one night always lies between two days and that every morning of life brings something new, she thinks as her golden hair and rosy face disappear under the broad brim of her Florentiner hat and she pulls her long yellowish gloves up over her elbows. Then she steps out lightly into the sparkling morning, smiles up at the mountain tops, steps over the flowers, cuts through the village and arrives at her favorite path. It is a very narrow footpath that leads into the blooming meadow and beyond, going further, ever further.

She walks along tall and slender, with a slight rocking of her hips, with wide-open senses through waves of scents. To the right and to the left of the shaking grass and laughing flowers tower hundreds of white, yellow and red butterflies like living blossoms that flutter around her in the quiet sunny

air. High above, almost out of sight larks are rejoicing.

The sun climbs and climbs, she goes faster and faster as if with wings. She breathes deeply with delight and bliss. Finally she becomes tired. Oh, if only my arms were legs so that I could wander forever! She sighs—then she turns onto a side path which leads to a cliff wall, throws herself down into the shadows, takes her Florentine her hat off and closes her large gray eyes, blissfully tired. When she gets up again her glance catches two dragonflies flying from the shadows into the sunlight near her. They hover there up-and-down, back and forth, always tightly joined. They shimmer together in a sweet game of love, their four flashing, iridescent transparent wings almost touching.

Her large gray eyes follow every movement of the insects and her rosy face suddenly turns pale, hot desire shakes her slender body, tears fall out of her eyes. The dragonflies are a couple, a couple, but she is alone.

Mia Holm

Song

Let us escape the crowd

See, I open the door

And carry you in my arms

A thousand miles high

There in the hazy distance

Die the red fires of the Earth

On a lonely star

We will find our bliss

Lightly I hold the power

Of victor and slave there

I chase away all the disturbing

Moths into the night

I will not allow them

To jeopardize your slumber

On a lonely star

We will find our bliss

And my hand easily covers

Your lovely face

So the lightning does not frighten it

As it breaks through the dark clouds

So it doesn’t hear the cries

Of the down trodden on Earth

On a lonely star

We will find our bliss

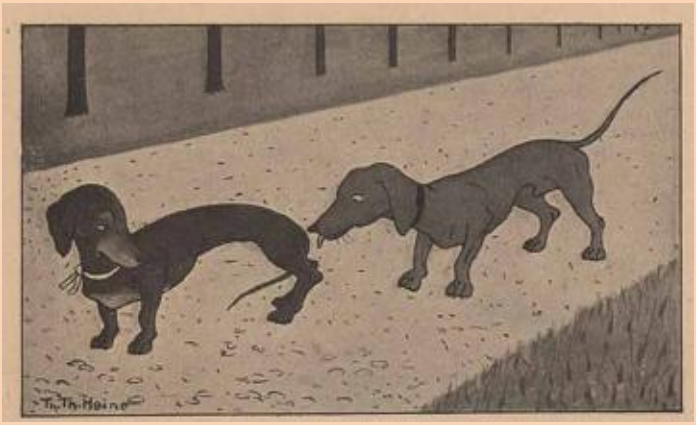
Theodor Wolff

Wurst and Love

A dog story in seven pictures

By Th. Th. Heine

1 First encounter

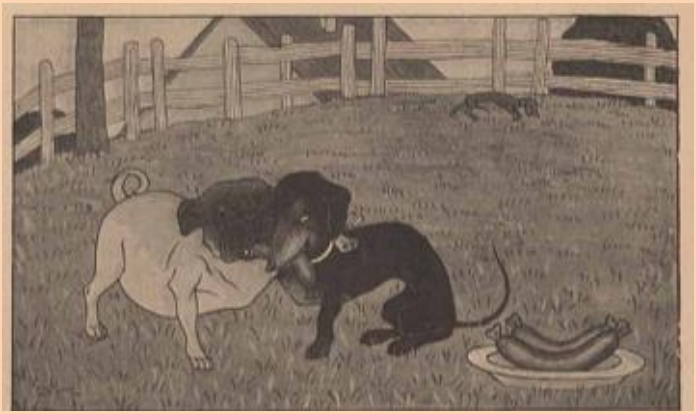


2 Declaration of love

3 Blissful hours

4 A dangerous rival

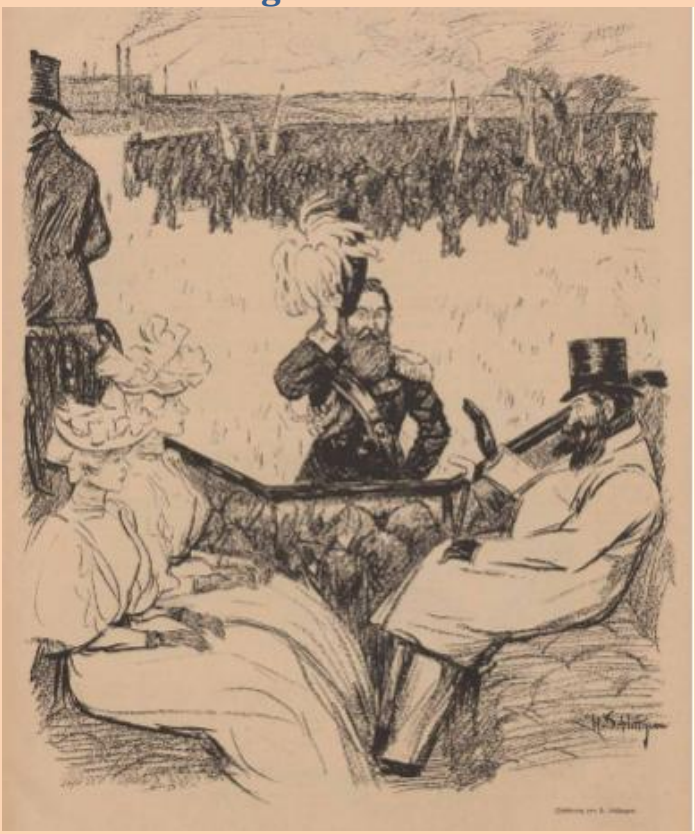
5 Unfaithful



6 A remorseful sinner

7 Happy marriage

King and folk



Womanizer: (After King inquires about the crowd of folk over there) “Socialists, your Majesty!”

King; “Greet the folk for me and tell them that nothing will come of it—absolutely nothing.”

Homage

By Georg Herwegh

Bells ring! Cannons thunder! Zion opens its doors!

Israel! Bring him forward, bring him palm and tricolors. The Messiah, the monarch is come! Make the happy news known, the Messiah, the prophet—out of the old German Federation. He has graciously taken on the burden of the golden scepter, taken on our own renounced manhood. Lay down you waves of revolution! Place, oh you ocean of folk, place the Kaiser's tax on the proud victory train!

The Master's command quiets the turbulent ocean of these times, rescues Austria's shipwrecked galley safely into the German harbor; subdues the elements that promised us peace. It brings a creation without life and a chaos without spirit.

Bells ring! Cannons thunder! All blessings come from above, blow the trombone you poets! That the Prince may be praised.

Doubtful, sober lad, show the high voiced crowd how they have drunkenly taken John for the Redeemer! Oh, Redeemer, do a miracle, open the eyes of this folk. It's too bad really that only princes can be redeemers. The holy Christ has been completely forgotten, presumed dead for a long time now. Didn't the Bible prove that he was no commoner?

In the Kaiser's palace they rejoice and booze, and in the mad gloomy places that house the criminals as well. And with the much praised loyalty (which heaven has damned them for!) the bawdy poor coil around the old stem. Joy prevails in Trojas Hall—the Ministry is successful.

All of the ardent apostles wander around preaching. How abundant is the harvest and how agile the reaper! And we calmly thrash empty straw in Parliament. But insidious Austria, the spider, lies hidden in wait to win over all the stupid, trusting flies and string them on the unity wreath of its threads, like the thirty-four beautiful pearls of our German Fatherland. And what does he bring you for thanks? Gem's from out of all the crowns. He brings the curse of the nation to us as the most beautiful morning, he brings Habsburg-Lothringen! The inexorable dominion of law, the harvest of Metternich and the hangman, on a butcher's wind—

Trampled Bohemia cries out in its death struggle, "Woe! Woe! The complaints that flow out of Poland are eternal like the waters of the Weichsel. More sad

news notifies us of the appearance of new flames. Today the barbarians have moved into the Cathedral of Milan.

They have contaminated your doctors, dripped the seeds of decay into your veins. Hope no more of recovery. Germany is diseased, only in fever does it speak of a new world. History has determined that only the graveyard remains for the servile hand. Look, how you stand on the path, one hundred thousand domestics, begging for a ray of grace from the Tyrolean gaze! Cowardly rabble, let your voice ring out as powerful as thunder! You want everything pleasurable, yet you serve with passion!

It was only yesterday that you cried:

“Barricades! Barricade’s!”

And in penitent shirt the God of God’s grace stood before the folk. The last hero’s blood ran into the sand in vain. Those remaining are snail soft! They color a purple robe well. The Caesars have come again after the Ides of March. Still once more we are cheated, and the heavens will joke. Sleep now, sleep, you leaves of hope. You have awoken too early and Europe is still covered with the cold and silence of the old night as always. Let us sacrifice to the new God’s, that we may hide the shame of the German folk in a consecrated cloud of smoke!

Bells ring! Cannons thunder! Flattering, flattering cheap brass! Each shot goes straight through the middle of the heart of young freedom.

Paris, 9 August 1848

To Georg Herwegh in the summer of 1852

You once struck freely

As a knight George

In beautiful daring brilliance

The dragon of tyranny

With sharp song lances

You cried in hallowed

Outbursts of anger

A singer’s bright sword song

With your freedom—wonder horn

Loudly out to the path of battle

The youth heard the impassioned call

They listened to all the notes

Your songs created spring

And a laurel crown for you

The breath of your songs struck

The monarchy on its head

So that many believed

The crown itself was not certain

And as the youth became enflamed

On the breath of your songs

And as the rooster over there

Proclaimed the morning hour

You appeared on the field of slaughter as well—

Yet the masses were still sleeping—

The enemy would have really laughed

If you had allowed yourself to be captured!

From then on the new servitude began

And at the same time your silence

And many men that were cowards

Were happy to call you a coward

And many that were degenerate

With pleasure called you a degenerate

—and you are almost guilty

Of these things!

I know you have your quiver full

Of sharp song arrows

From whose wounds none shall ever heal

I know, your arm, like before,

Can still bend the bow of song

I know you are still the man you used to be

If you would only give yourself a chance

Such a song is really needed

In these miserable times

Because we blush red hot for shame

So forge us a hammer!

Forge us a hard song hammer

For the next battle that nears

And is already revealed

In the wild stampede of animals

In these times we need a song

That comes crashing down

Out of black clouds like the lightning

Yet glows as well in the folk

A song, which all the lumps know

One that will make them smile

And from that smile a passionate

Love for life will burst forth and shine.

And if a singer had such a high song
With words and notes
And remained solid, through praise and scorn
In this forge of life
That person could reach the heights
From which they could freely look down
It is you, you have the power
To send such a lightning song

And if you sing this world song
Which I in this glance, offer
You will see a glow of hope
Which will become reality
Then you will laugh, when they laughingly
Call you an inflated Don Quixote
When they attempt to ridicule you
With their crude weapons!

Robert Bruss

Abschied im Frühling

Leaving In Spring

By Carl Busse

You stood at the door and protected your eyes from the light

You said over and over, “I don’t believe it.”

You said over and over “… I want to go now and never see you again.”

You said nothing else and the sun’s rays shone into the room

Through the bars of the oriental window

Your glove fell down, we both bent over

I heard the rustling of your dress

If only the passion had come to your eyes

That I would have accepted more quickly

And from the hallway we heard your mother’s speech

About compensation for every…

Then you tore yourself loose—”Content yourself, my love”

And then you were gone…

Yet the sun remained

I wanted to call you—I must remain silent

I watched as you climbed into the coach

Your suitcase was pushed onto the seat

A greeting to your mother, a quick glance back

Meanwhile the snot began to drip a little—

And Spring?

Oh, dear Spring looked on and saw everything